




22 Sept 67

Mr. Bannerman via Mr. Warfield via 

In the attached memorandum from Mr.  regarding the National Communications System, he indicates some concern with regard to an "alternative which would contemplate the establishment of a single integrated system under a single manager and singly financed." This is mentioned specifically in paragraph 7, page 3.

In paragraph 9, page 3 he concludes "It is too early to establish the seriousness of the threat to the anonymity of our communications system. Certainly it is serious enough to bring to your attention and you will probably want to alert others to the implications of Alternative 3."



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22 SEP 1967

11/12/5 67-4875

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Support

SUBJECT : National Communications System - Concept of Operation

1. This memorandum is for your information and possible action as indicated in paragraph 9.

2. On October 31, 1966 Presidential approval of the National Communications System Long Range Plan (FY 1968 - 72) was forwarded to the Executive Agent, NCS by Mr. James D. O'Connell, Special Assistant to the President for Telecommunications. Mr. O'Connell's letter also contained the following guidance (underlining provided by me):

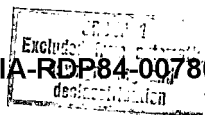
"Substantial progress toward attaining stated objectives has been made during the three year history of the NCS and this is becoming more evident as each milestone is identified and reached. As recognized in the Plan, however, a greater degree of unification is needed to meet the concept as prescribed in the documents which established the NCS.

"It is now appropriate to develop a longer range system design for the NCS. An essential first step is the formulation of a concept of a system configuration to attain the optimum degree of operational effectiveness in the 1970 - 1980 time frame with due regard to technological and economic factors. In the examination of the spectrum of available options, due consideration should be given to the statutory responsibilities and managerial prerogatives of the several Operating Agency heads. However, should these factors prove to inhibit the orderly development of the future system envisaged, this fact should be reported.

"It is requested that the recommended concept be submitted for Presidential approval. The various alternatives, the advantages and disadvantages and the rationale for each, and any differing views should be included. The status of the concept and the steps programmed for the subsequent development of a more detailed system design should be reflected in the next Long Range Plan."

3. General Starbird, Manager, NCS, called a meeting of the NCS principals (i.e., Mr. Scott and similar officials from the other agencies)

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on 29 March 1967 to discuss the task levied by the Special Assistant to the President for Telecommunications (SAPT) and how it might best be accomplished. It was agreed at this meeting that two groups would be established: a Steering Group comprised of the Manager and NCS principals and a Study Group comprised of NCS designated representatives [redacted] and his counterparts).

4. The Study Group was directed to:

- a. Prepare a study of the present NCS concept of operations.
- b. Recommend an NCS concept of operations for the time frame 1968 - 1973.
- c. Provide a series of alternative concepts of operation for the time period 1973 - 1978, without analysis of each alternative.

5. The Study Group completed its assigned task in mid-August and the Steering Group convened on 6 September 1967 to review the Study Group paper and take further action in accordance with Mr. O'Connell's letter. Each of the Study Group's three tasks as identified in paragraphs 4.a, b, and c above were separately reviewed. Little comment other than a "well done" was required for the response to paragraph 4.a above. The Study Group's recommendation as requested in paragraph 4.b was, essentially, to continue the present concept of operation through 1973. The Steering Group concurred in this recommendation with some minor changes in emphasis.

6. The alternative concepts for application over the longer time frame (1973 - 1978), however, were the subject of rather extensive discussion. The first two alternatives were accepted as logical for further analysis. These were:

a. To continue the development of an integrated system with the agencies continuing to operate the component parts - in effect a continuation of the present modus operandi.

b. Establish a single integrated backbone trunking system. This system could be:

- (1) Singly managed and financed.
- (2) Portions of the backbone system managed and financed by NCS operating agencies with common technical control facilities under the over-all operational guidance and emergency direction of the Manager, NCS.

7. General Starbird suggested and eventually the Steering Group agreed, that the NCS must of necessity consider a third alternative regardless of its repugnance to all those present. This third alternative would contemplate the establishment of a single integrated system under a single manager and singly financed. It would include all elements of the system down to terminal facilities. As unthinkable as this latter alternative was to those present, it was agreed that it should be studied in depth along with the other two.

8. General Starbird's reasoning in support of including this third alternative was about as follows. The President's "Message on Communications Policy" dated 14 August 1967 has added a new dimension to the work of the Steering Group. In his message the President stated, "I have asked the Bureau of the Budget to make a thorough study of governmental organization in the field of communications and to propose needed modifications." The BOB has traditionally supported greater consolidation of like functions. It, therefore, is to be expected that if the NCS cannot say that they are studying a monolithic approach as one possible concept of operation, the BOB would undertake such a study. Further, the NCS principals agreed that if "outsiders" undertook this study they would not necessarily refer to the communications experts for information and could very easily reach conclusions based primarily on economic factors without due consideration of operational and security problems and command prerogatives, so well understood by the communicators.

9. Final guidance to the Study Group will be forthcoming shortly after which detailed study of the various alternatives will begin. It is estimated that it will take at least one year to complete the task. There is a strong feeling among the participants that a study of all alternatives was inevitable and that the results will dispell the idea that a monolithic concept is best or even workable. We cannot, of course, be sure of this until a thorough and honest study has been completed. It is too early to estimate the seriousness of the threat to the autonomy of our communications system. Certainly it is serious enough to bring to your attention and you will probably want to alert others to the implications of Alternative 3.



Acting Director of Communications